

## Message Text

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21  
ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARA-10 EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /106 R

DRAFTED BY AF/P:JMPOPE:MR

APPROVED BY AF/P:JMPOPE

----- 070028

P 29222Z SEP 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, RH

SUBJECT: SEPT. 29 PRESS BRIEFING ON RHODESIA

1. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN FRED BROWN, AT SEPT. 29 PRESS  
BRIEFING, WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER MESSAGE HAD BEEN  
SENT TO IAN SMITH ON SEPT. 22 CONTAINING ASSURANCES.

2. FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF BRIEFING (BEGIN TEXT):

Q: FRED, THERE STILL SEEMS TO BE SOME DIFFERENCE OF OPINION  
ABOUT EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING ON CONCERNING THE FIVE POINTS  
PLUS ONE.

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SMITH IS QUOTED TODAY AS SAYING THAT HE WAS TOLD THAT

THE POSITIONS WERE SET AND THAT THEY WERE NOT NEGOTIABLE.  
THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT--POINT 3. IS SMITH  
LYING?

A: I AM AWARE OF THE REPORTS ON THIS, KEN.

I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO ADD TO YOUR FUND OF KNOW-  
LEDGE REGARDING THE RHODESIA NEGOTIATIONS. I MUST REFER  
YOU TO WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY -- NOT ONLY ON  
THE TODAY SHOW INTERVIEW, WHICH HAS A GOOD BIT ON PRECISELY

THAT SUBJECT, THE POSITION OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES -- BUT  
ALSO HIS STATEMENT AFTER TESTIFYING ON THE HILL YESTERDAY  
MORNING.

I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO ADD ANYTHING TO THAT,  
TODAY.

Q: WELL SPECIFICALLY, SMITH SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSURED  
IN A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY, ON THE 22ND OF SEPTEMBER,  
THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER DEMANDS FROM THE AFRICAN  
PRESIDENTS.

THAT QUESTION WAS NOT REACHED, IN ANY WAY, BY THE PUB-  
LIC STATEMENTS YESTERDAY, OR PREVIOUSLY. COULD THAT  
QUESTION BE TAKEN?

A: I CAN CERTAINLY TAKE THE QUESTION. BUT I WOULD REFER  
YOU TO THE SECRETARY'S COMMENT YESTERDAY, NAMELY TO THE  
EFFECT THAT THERE WERE NO --

Q: THAT IS NOT IN THE LEAST RESPONSIVE.

THE QUESTION ASKED AT YESTERDAY'S BRIEFING WAS ASKED  
BY BERNIE GWERTZMAN, WHO WAS FULLY AWARE OF WHAT THE  
SECRETARY HAD SAID IN PUBLIC; AND HE WOULD NOT HAVE ASKED  
THE QUESTION IF HE HAD THOUGHT THAT THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS  
ANSWERED IT.

A: NO. I AM REFERRING TO WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID ON THE  
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TODAY SHOW IN THE INTERVIEW. HAVE YOU SEEN COPIES OF  
THAT?

Q: YES.

A: O.K.

Q: HE DOESN'T SAY --

Q: BUT WOULD YOU FIND OUT, THOUGH --

Q: AND I AM ASKING THAT IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THEY SAID ON THE TODAY SHOW -- AND I AM ASKING THE QUESTION.

A: I CAN TAKE THE QUESTION, BUT I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE, HERE, TO GO BEYOND WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY.

Q: YOU WILL FIND OUT WHETHER THE MESSAGE WAS SENT ON THE 22ND? AND WHETHER IT DID ASSURE SMITH THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER DEMANDS?

A: THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY THERE WERE NO COMMITMENTS, IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ON THAT.

Q: WILL YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE MESSAGE, AND WHAT IT SAID? THEN WE WILL BE ASSURED.

I MEAN, SMITH SEEMS TO BE CHALLENGING WHAT KISSINGER HAS BEEN SAYING.

A: LOOK, THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY, THAT IN THIS PERIOD OF SETTING UP THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS PEOPLE ARE GOING TO STAKE OUT POSITIONS IN VARIOUS AREAS, AND THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE REPLYING OR COMMENTING ON EVERYTHING THAT IS SAID IN THIS PRELIMINARY PERIOD.

Q: SO THAT IT WOULD BE FAIR FOR US TO WRITE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT FEELS THAT SMITH IS ENGAGING IN MEANINGLESS RHETORIC?

A: THE SECRETARY MADE AN OBSERVATION YESTERDAY, WITH REGARD TO THE PRESENT PERIOD OF STATEMENTS AND COUNTER-UNCLASSIFIED

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STATEMENTS BEING MADE, THAT YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THE POSITIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL PARTIES INVOLVED AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON AT THE MOMENT.

SO I CANNOT REALLY ADD TO THAT.

I THINK THE SECRETARY ADDRESSED THAT TWICE YESTERDAY.

Q: FRED, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, THE SECRETARY DID NOT ADDRESS THAT; AND I THINK OZZIE'S QUESTION IS A SUBSEQUENT QUESTION TO WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY.

WAS THERE A 22 SEPTEMBER MESSAGE TO SMITH? AND WHAT DOES IT SAY? THAT IS REALLY THE GIST OF IT.

A: THIS, I DO NOT KNOW.

IF THE QUESTION IS COUCHED IN TERMS OF: "WAS THERE ANY KIND OF SECRET COMMITMENT?" AS HAS BEEN STATED IN SEVERAL PRESS REPORTS FROM RHODESIA, NO.

AND THE SECRETARY SAID AS MUCH, YESTERDAY. THERE IS NO SECRET COMMITMENT.

Q: SO YOU ARE DENYING WHAT HAS BEEN SAID?

A: I AM SIMPLY REPEATING WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY.

Q: DON'T PUT WORDS IN OUR MOUTHS, FRED. WE DID NOT SUGGEST THERE'S A SECRET COMMITMENT -- AT LEAST I HAVEN'T, AND I DONT.

A: YOU JUST USED THE WORDS "WE HAVEN'T ANY ASSURANCES," --

Q: WE ARE ASKING WHAT MESSAGE WAS SENT, AND WHAT THE MESSAGE SAID --

A: WELL I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THAT --

Q: AND, WAIT A MINUTE -- AND DID SMITH MISINTERPRET IT, UNCLASSIFIED

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PERHAPS, OR --

A: I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THAT.

Q: WELL NOW WAIT A MINUTE.

A MINUTE AGO, YOU SAID YOU WOULD CONSIDER TAKING THE QUESTION: WHETHER, AS SMITH SAID, A MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED FROM THE SECRETARY ON THE 22ND OF SEPTEMBER --

A: A MINUTE AGO, I SAID, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, THAT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO ADD TO WHAT HAS BEEN SAID ON THE STATUS OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THE MOMENT.

AND I AM NOT GOING TO ADD TO THAT.

Q: BUT WILL YOU TAKE THE QUESTION?

A: I WILL BE GLAD TO POSE THE QUESTION. (END TEXT) ROBINSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TEXT, PRESS CONFERENCES, NEGOTIATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE242350  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** JMPAPE:MR  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760368-0534  
**From:** STATE  
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**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t1976096/aaaaaemym.tel  
**Line Count:** 221  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN AF  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 10 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <22 DEC 2004 by greeneet>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SEPT. 29 PRESS BRIEFING ON RHODESIA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, US, RH, SF, (SMITH, IAN D), (BROWN, FRED)  
**To:** AF POSTS  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006